

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
March 19, 2018
Superintendent's Conference Room – Wellesley Middle School**

The Open Session of the School Committee convened at 11:38 AM. Those present included School Committee Chair Michael D'Ortenzio Jr., Secretary Melissa Martin, and members Sharon Gray and Linda Chow; Superintendent David Lussier; Assistant Superintendent Judy Belliveau; and Advisory Committee Members Jane Andrews (left at 12:30 PM) and Tom Fitzgibbons. Vice Chair Matt Kelley was not present.

FY19 BUDGET PROCESS DEBRIEF

The Chair stated that he had invited the Advisory members to attend the meeting to discuss the Town-wide Financial Plan and to debrief on the FY19 budget process.

Members of the Committee opened the discussion by remarking that the budget process had been a positive one and that the Administration had worked hard to develop a budget responsive to the Committee's guidelines. After the FY19 budget development process, it was noted that there is a shared interest with the Town on working on an approach to manage the variability in special education costs. It has been proposed to focus on this work over the summer. The Committee expressed appreciation for the role of Advisory and its liaisons in reviewing the budget, asking detailed questions and maintaining a focus on the big picture.

The Advisory members highlighted the importance of pursuing a solution to the challenges of managing the fluctuating special education costs and agreed that study of the issue over the summer would be positive. They also noted the continued importance of leveraging the resources that currently exist and stated that it is hard to envision guidelines for the Schools below 3.5% that would be realistic. Due to the size and complexity of the Schools budget, it was stated that it could be useful to have two different Advisory sessions for the Schools budget presentation. Finally, the Advisory members noted that it would be helpful to have the budget submission a week earlier, if possible.

The Administration agreed that the relationship with Advisory had been positive and, in particular, appreciated the understanding of Advisory on the fluctuations and challenges in managing the special education expenditures. The Administration expressed concern that the discussion surrounding percentage guidelines for future years anchors the conversation based on percentages and does not necessarily focus on an identification of the real needs and the cost associated. This is particularly relevant as we move into a contract negotiation year. In addition, the Administration noted that meeting the current deadline for the budget submission is exceedingly challenging and did not believe it feasible to move forward any earlier.

The Committee and the Advisory members identified and discussed pressure on the Town-wide economic drivers that may affect the budget moving forward and emphasized the importance of educating Town residents as to the issues facing the Schools. One suggestion was to include a long-term financial plan to accompany the strategic plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION PROCESS

Ms. Gray provided a summary of the superintendent's evaluation process from the previous year. Through the evaluation, the Committee members identified the superintendent's performance against his goals and completed a detailed matrix. Each member had the opportunity to meet individually with the superintendent to further inform the completion of the draft evaluation. The individual evaluations were then combined into a summative evaluation.

The Committee discussed the possibility of using the matrix in a manner more narrowly tailored to the superintendent's goals. The Committee then discussed the possibility of developing a rubric to determine merit pay and decided that this could be a good item to add to the spring retreat agenda.

UNIFIED PLAN FEEDBACK

It was noted that the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board were scheduled to vote on the Unified Plan that evening. Considering that timeframe and the fact that the Committee had previously provided feedback, the Committee decided not to provide additional feedback on the Unified Plan.

DATE FOR SPRING RETREAT

The Committee discussed potential dates for the spring retreat and identified April 30 and May 4 as options.

TRACK AND FIELD PHASE II

Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. provided an update on the Track and Field Phase II project, and in particular the discussions surrounding the maintenance of the new buildings as those costs had not been built into the FY19 operating budgets. It is unclear what the cost will be as it will be somewhat dependent upon usage; however, Ms. Belliveau estimated that it would cost approximately \$3600 per year if the maintenance could be accomplished in two hours a week.

The Committee discussed the possibility of covering the FY19 costs associated with the maintenance with School funds and then considering the transfer of this responsibility to the Facilities Management Department (FMD) in FY20, as this group maintains the other buildings.

HHU UPDATE

Ms. Gray provided an update on the HHU projects. She noted that an Advisory meeting is scheduled for April 25 to discuss the Special Town Meeting (STM) for the feasibility studies for the HHU projects. In addition, the current proposed date for a Public

Hearing on these articles is on May 2. Ms. Gray noted that the articles and warrants are being developed in consultation with Town Counsel as it is necessary to ensure that they are appropriately structured, especially in consideration of the requirements of the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

The Committee discussed planning for the STM and the possibility of conducting tours of the facilities for Town Meeting Members as well as providing guest commentary for the Townsman providing background on the project. Ms. Gray also noted that the SBC will be updating the website and adding to it the information that was not transferred from the HHU Master Planning Committee website when the Town switched to a new website infrastructure.

The Committee summarized the items for which the Committee will be responsible prior to the STM. The Committee will need to finalize the membership of the School Building Committee, approve the Request for Qualifications for both feasibility studies and participate in communication regarding the STM.

Ms. Gray noted that she will provide a more substantial update on the HHU process and on the possibility of using St. Paul as a swing space option at the meeting scheduled for the next evening.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to adjourn at 1:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Martin
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used

None